

able to complete missions because members know that their families are being cared for during their absence.

Donations to the N.C. National Guard Family Readiness Program are being collected through Speedway Children's Charities and can be made online through a special link at: [**www.speedwaycharities.org**](http://www.speedwaycharities.org), or through the Office of the Governor web site: [**www.governor.state.nc.us**](http://www.governor.state.nc.us). Contributions can also be mailed to: North Carolina National Guard Family Readiness Program; P.O. Box 32127; Raleigh, N.C. 27622.

"The North Carolina National Guard Family Readiness Program helps make our military community stronger," said Gen. William Ingram, commander of the N.C. National Guard. "As a result of the hard work, and excellent services the Family Readiness Program provides, the National Guard is able to attract and retain quality guardsmen who serve our state and nation so well."

Operation Kids on Guard is one of the state National Guard Family Readiness Program's most popular initiatives. Inaugurated in North Carolina in 2004, Operation Kids on Guard allows children ages 5 to 18 participate in day and overnight drills to better understand the roles their parents play in the military.

There are about 12,000 members of the North Carolina Army and Air National Guard in 164 units as well as another 10,235 Army, Navy, Marine and Air Force reservists. Since Sept. 11, 2001, more than 10,000 members of the N.C. National Guard have been mobilized in operations Iraqi Freedom, Enduring Freedom and Noble Eagle. Also, during the same time, more than 3,800 members of the guard have been called to duty to respond to hurricanes, floods, ice storms and other disasters.

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